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TW, CH

SUBJECT: TAIWAN FOREIGN MINISTRY MULLING NEXT STEPS ON
INTERNATIONAL SPACE

REF: TAIPEI 510

Classified By: Director Stephen M. Young for Reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is consulting with other agencies to prioritize Taiwan's international space needs and develop recommendations on next steps now that Taiwan has been invited to observe at this year's World Health Assembly. MOFA International Organizations (IO) Department Deputy Director General Lily Hsu told Taiwan Coordination Desk Deputy Director Deena Parker in an April 30 meeting that Taiwan is most likely to push next for a bigger role in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), or the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). Although Taiwan would like to participate in the UN Framework for Climate Convention (UNFCCC), this is not possible under the old rubric, where Taiwan NGO Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) is labeled a "Chinese" organization. Hsu also asked for U.S. help in warding off further PRC encroachment on Taiwan's interests and status in the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). End summary.

International Space "Next Step" Unclear

¶2. (C) MOFA International Organizations Department DDG Lily Hsu expressed appreciation for the U.S. public statement of support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) this May. She noted that such support was essential to continuing Taiwan's efforts to expand its meaningful participation in various international organizations crucial to the interests of Taiwan's people. Although Taiwan has succeeded in its goal of obtaining observer status in the May 18-27 WHA meeting (reftel), it has no clear "next step" on international space at this time, Hsu told EAP/TC Deputy Director Deena Parker. To avoid a scattershot approach and focus Taiwan's diplomatic energies, MOFA is in the process of interagency consultations to determine and prioritize Taiwan's international space needs. The idea, Hsu said, is to develop a list of international organizations in which expanded participation would bring tangible benefits to the people of Taiwan. When this process is finished, MOFA will submit its recommendations to the Executive Yuan. At this point, said Hsu, Taiwan's most pressing needs are in the areas of aviation, maritime issues, law enforcement cooperation, and environmental topics. Based on that, Hsu said, ICAO, IMO, and Interpol are seen as the

most promising candidates for the "next steps" after WHA.

¶3. (C) Taiwan's ministries and agencies are not waiting for MOFA's approval, however, to solicit U.S. support for Taiwan participation in international organizations relating to their particular purviews. For example, in a May 1 meeting with Parker to discuss Taiwan's anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) efforts, National Immigration Agency (NIA) Director General Hsieh Li-kung asked for U.S. support and advice on how Taiwan could participate in the International Organization of Migration (IOM).

¶4. (C) MOFA is not naive enough to believe that gaining WHA observership this year means everything is open to Taiwan now, Hsu said. They had heard from other sources that Beijing considers Taiwan's WHA participation to be an exception. Beijing does not want a spillover effect to other international organizations, Hsu concluded.

Previous Framework for UNFCCC Participation Unacceptable

¶5. (C) MOFA's review of how Taiwan engages in international organizations has revealed some problems, Hsu said. For example, for more than ten years Taiwan has tried to participate in the UN Framework for Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC). The problem is that the Taiwan-based NGO Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) participates in the Framework, but has been designated a "Chinese" organization. Despite support from the United States and others, the PRC has blocked Taiwan's efforts to have ITRI participate in the UNFCCC as a Taiwan NGO.

Holding Off the PRC at OIE

¶6. (C) Taiwan has been a longstanding and productive member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for many decades, said Hsu. Since the PRC joined, despite OIE's best efforts to avoid controversy and support Taiwan's continued meaningful participation, there have been disagreements over Taiwan's member status and nomenclature. Most recently, Beijing blocked OIE efforts to dodge the question of sovereignty by referring to all participants as "members" (rather than "member states"). Likewise, Beijing is pushing for the establishment of a Credentialing Committee to review members' qualifications, which Taiwan is concerned would result in MOFA officials being blocked from participating in OIE sessions. These are clearly PRC efforts, said Hsu, to exert influence over Taiwan's participation and to further degrade its status.

¶8. (C) While Taiwan is willing to discuss reasonable measures, implementation is a key concern. For example, would MOFA-issued credentials still be accepted? Would Taiwan's participation in OIE's administrative elections continue? Taiwan may need to coordinate with the U.S. delegation in advance of the meeting, said Hsu, and may approach Washington on these and other issues ahead of the OIE's May meeting.

Comment

¶9. (C) The good news on WHA observership makes the question of "What next?" relevant and timely. President Ma and MOFA understand that one key to Taiwan's success with WHA was the clear value - in terms of improved public health on Taiwan and globally - that greater participation should bring. MOFA's initial list of priorities for "next steps" suggests that this same calculation will apply as Taiwan moves forward. MOFA clearly does not expect the floodgates to now open, and believes that expanding Taiwan's international space will involve painstaking, organization-by-organization negotiation. On a very practical level, it is clear that MOFA is already overtaxed at the current tempo of operations. Hsu commented that not many officers want to stay for long

in the IO Department because of the heavy workload. It may take some time before a clear consensus on what Taiwan's next target(s) will be on international space. Meanwhile, we expect to continue to be approached by Taiwan agencies looking to push their cause to the front of the queue.

YOUNG